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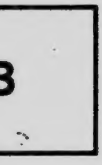

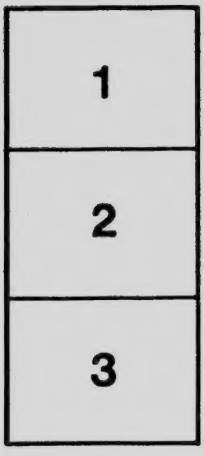

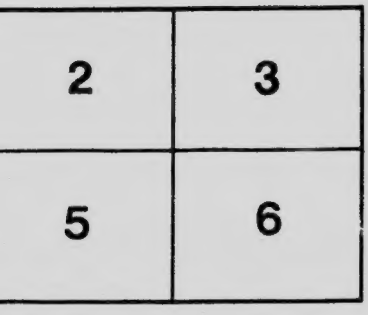

Circular Bulletin No. 25.

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA.

MAR 11 1920

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
(LIVE STOCK BRANCH).

HINTS ON EGG-HATCHING.

By J. R. Terry, Chief Poultry Instructor.

ARTIFICIAL INCUBATION.

DO NOT expect to get good hatches from stale eggs. The sooner eggs are incubated the better. Eggs shipped from a distance should always be set within a few minutes of receiving same, other advice notwithstanding. White and brown eggs should not be put in a machine together. The white eggs, if of equal age, generally hatch first, and the chicks bother the others just hatching.

Do not expect too much of a sitting hen or incubator. Far better to leave space in incubator than fill up with unhatchable eggs.

Try and get eggs of even size. Better distribution of heat then ensues.

If eggs are kept more than five days, they should be turned occasionally. Those placed in trays or racks should be covered with cloth or blanket.

Eggs are best set unwashed. Never wash eggs unless you are forced to. In other words, try and set only naturally clean eggs.

Eggs that show blood-rings present at test may have had blood-clots present before incubating. Don't blame the incubator always.

Never operate an incubator near a stove, or in a room where the sun's rays can reach the machine.

Wash out incubator with hot water and soap, to which has been added a little disinfectant.

Don't let children near incubator, and also see that the thermometer is correct.

When incubating duck, turkey, or geese eggs in incubator, see that the eggs at back of tray do not touch thermostat.

When turning eggs with tray full, put some of the eggs in hat or cap; something that is not stone-cold.

Keep top of incubator clear, and never put coal-oil lamp on top of incubator.

Always wash hands before turning eggs, and never start turning until eggs have been in three days.

Remember to omit turning eggs in morning if you find temperature below 100 degrees. It will help to prevent chilling.

Do not cool eggs on morning of the night you are testing, or vice versa.

To comply with egg-grading regulations, only eggs of standard weight (24 oz. to dozen or over) should be set. Pullets laying small eggs may mean a difference of 10 cents per dozen less, at market prices.

Don't test eggs too often. Heat of light may kill germs.

Leave in doubtful eggs, but mark them for identification. Learn by experience.

If you get poor results with a good incubator and apparently good eggs, omit about half the cooling period in future hatches.

Remember a hot-water machine can dry out the eggs as quickly as a hot-air machine. A supply of moisture (in pans) is advisable right from the start until

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the eighteenth night. Most incubators evaporate the egg too much. This means a smaller, weaker, and oftentimes deformed chick.

In a cold room in early spring the eggs will stand a higher temperature, 104 degrees on hang-up instead of 103 degrees. Contact thermometer (those that rest on the eggs) should remain at 103 degrees. Contact thermometers should not be moved all over the machine, but kept approximately in one place.

After testing the eggs, those trays that are flat should have laths or sticks placed loosely each side of the eggs to prevent rolling and probable damage when trays are lifted.

Never use top of incubator for turning eggs on trays, unless top is big enough to accommodate tray entirely. Better to use table. The tray should never overhang, as eggs thus exposed get cooled much faster.

Remember the colder the room the quicker the evaporation.

Don't expect an incubator to give 100 per cent. hatch from eggs from unthrifty stock.

Keep all hatching-eggs from frost and mustiness.

Nest-litter needs to be changed frequently.

Eggs can be incubated after males of heavy-weight classes have been mated ten days, and light-weight (Leghorns, Anconas, Hamburgs, Campines, etc.) after seven days. Bright sunny days are very favourable for breeding purposes.

If incubator tray of eggs is left out by mistake, don't get alarmed. Put back in machine, and do not turn or open door of machine for at least twenty-four hours.

If lamp goes out, follow out advice given in preceding paragraph.

See that lamp-wick is renewed at each hatching. This is very important.

Trim wick and fill lamps late afternoon. Will ensure a steady flame during the night.

It is advisable to replace the burlap on screen in nursery compartment if it gets dirty. It is better than washing it.

If heating incubator by coal-stove, the addition of a little coke to the coal will work wonders, especially if the coal is slaty. Coke should never be put on until the fire is burning brightly.

Don't take chicks out of machine too soon, and when removing to brooder, see that basket or box is lined with warm cloth or blanket.

NATURAL INCUBATION.

When starting to set hen, try warming the nest egg or eggs, especially if you move hen at night to strange nest.

In early spring eleven or twelve hens' eggs are sufficient for a medium-sized hen to cover.

It is poor policy to use old and dirty nest-boxes. Burn up old boxes, and use clean ones each year. The bigger the nest-box, less chance of hen crushing eggs or chicks.

When using earth in bottom of nest, be certain to provide good depth of soft litter. Occasionally cold damp soil will chill the eggs.

Don't allow hen to sit too long without a "rest." She should be lifted off daily.

Shells from hatched eggs should be crushed up and fed hens.

Fowls fed plenty of greenstuff are more likely to lay eggs that will hatch strong chicks, especially if the breeding stock has plenty of range.

Thrifty breeding stock, properly housed, well fed, especially the male bird, means strong chicks.

Keep track of your hatches. The Department supplies record forms for incubators, also sitting hens. Sent free on receipt of postal.

VICTORIA, B.C.:
Printed by WILLIAM H. CULLIN, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty,
1920.